



The Second Time Around...Grandparents as Caregivers

home and be coresident with their grandchildren, etc.

Interestingly, for the counties with available 2005 data, Davis shows the highest percentage of coresident grandparents and grandchildren, at 4.5 percent. The other Wasatch Front counties—Salt Lake, Weber, and Utah—all show percentages at or slightly higher than the state average of 3.8 percent. On the other hand, Washington County shows only 2.8 percent of its over-30 population living in the same home as their grandchildren. This may reflect the fact that many of the county’s grandparents have retired from other areas, often far away from their grandchildren.

Going it Alone

Of course, not all these grandparents are raising their grandchildren on their own—many provide homes for their children along with their grandchildren or are living in their children’s homes. Yet, about 44 percent of grandparents with coresident grandchildren had sole responsibility for the care of those children. Again, Utah ranks slightly higher than the U.S. average of 43 percent.

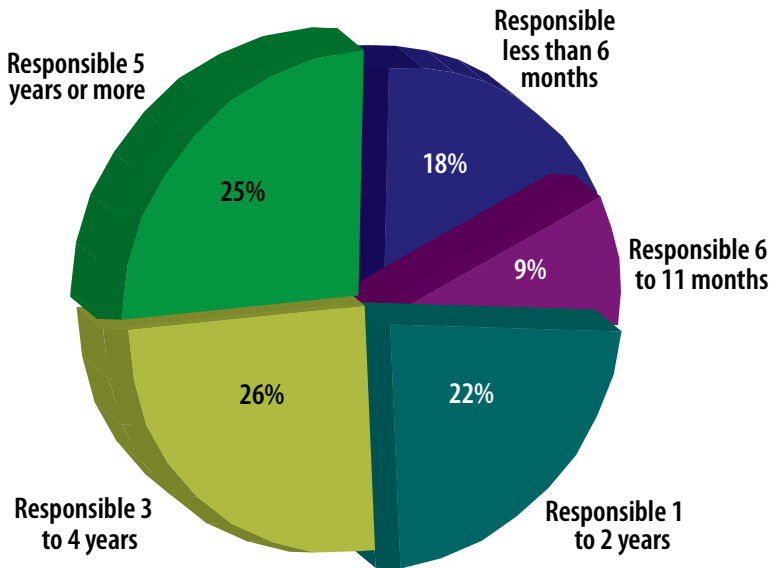
Not surprisingly, younger grandparents are more likely to be responsible for their grandchildren. Of the 19,000-plus grandparents responsible for caregiving in 2005, roughly two-thirds were under age of 60. This leaves a substantial one-third of caregivers in the older age group.

For the Long Haul

For many grandparents, caregiving is a long-term commitment. One-fourth of caregiving grandparents had already been taking care of their grandchildren for five or more years. Here Utah grandparents deviate from the national norm. In the United States, 37 percent of caregiving grandparents have played that role for five years or more. And keep in mind that roughly three-fourths of caregiving grandparents have already had the job for one year or more.

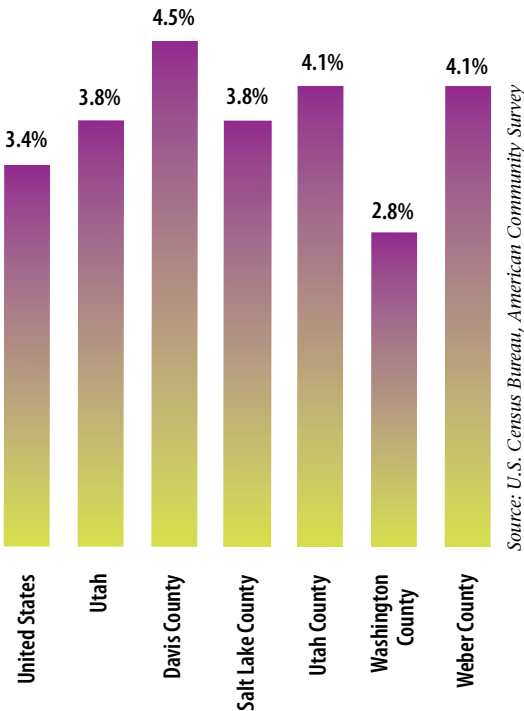
For more information on grandparents as caregivers and other demographic data see: <http://www.census.gov/acs>

2005 Utah Length of Time Coresident Grandparents Responsible for Caregiving



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

2005 Percentage of Population over 30 Living with Grandchildren



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Here’s a scenario you might never have envisioned. You’ve raised your children. You thought you were finished with childrearing. You’re ready for those “golden years.” Then all of a sudden you find yourself in the thick of raising kids again. However, this time, the young ones don’t happen to be your own kids, but your grandchildren.

Because of the death, divorce, drug abuse, mental illness, or the irresponsibility of parents, many grandparents are currently caregivers for their grandchildren. However, it wasn’t until the 2000 Census that data was available to track this phenomenon. And now the American Community Survey provides yearly data for the nation, states, and larger counties that helps us understand the magnitude of this situation.

You may be new to American Community Survey data. This survey is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and provides economic and demographic data for years between the decennial censuses. The survey provides a wealth of information for

those looking for current information about their area (see the article on page 20).

In Close Proximity

In 2005, roughly 44,000 Utahns lived with their grandchildren under the age of 18. That’s roughly 3.8 percent of the population over the age of 30—higher than the U.S. average of 3.4 percent. In fact, Utah ranks ninth in a state ranking of the percentage of grandparents who are living with their grandchildren. The South (Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Georgia) and the West (Hawaii, California, Utah, and New Mexico) appear to dominate the top ten, which perhaps reflects cultural differences.

Keep in mind that these figures can represent a multitude of situations. For example, grandparents could be the householders with an unmarried or divorced child and their children living in the grandparents’ home. On the other hand, grandparents could be living in their adult child’s